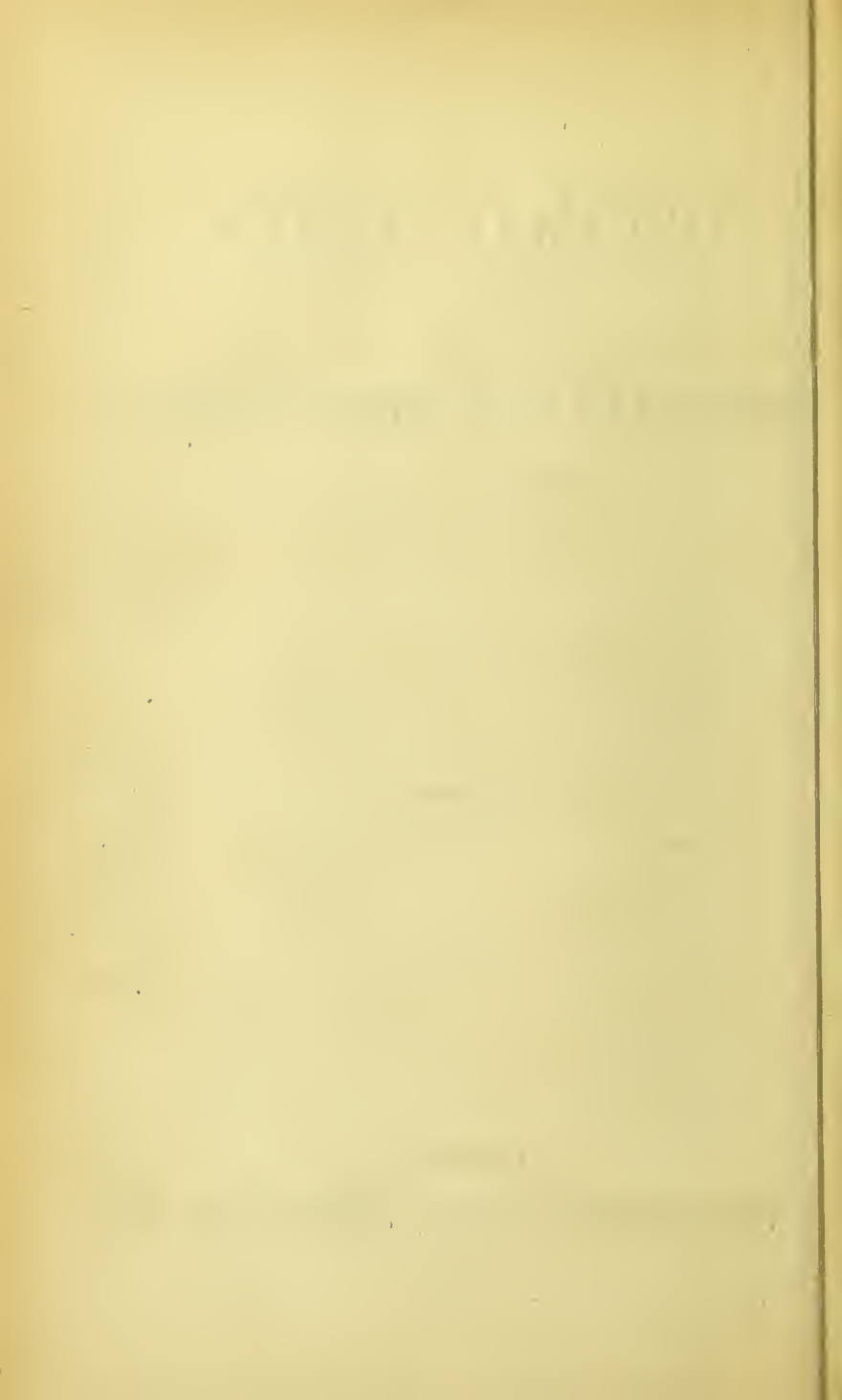


DECIMAL COINS,
WEIGHTS & MEASURES.

LONDON:

R. GROOMBRIDGE & SONS, 5, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1846.



ON THE

CURRENT

COINAGE OF GREAT BRITAIN,

AS THE MEDIUM OF

BARTER, CALCULATION, AND ACCOUNTS;

AND ON

PROFESSOR DE MORGAN'S PLAN

FOR ITS MORE CONVENIENT AND SCIENTIFIC ARRANGEMENT,

ON THE

DECIMAL SYSTEM,

WITH THE ADVANTAGES THAT WOULD RESULT FROM IT, EXEMPLIFIED.

BY HENRY TAYLOR.

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London:

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SUGGESTIONS

FOR A

DECIMAL CURRENCY.

AMONG the many improvements that have of late years been introduced in our social economy, is one, which, though never entirely lost sight of, has not received the attention due to its practical importance, and, as many think, to our national character, as the first commercial community in the world—I mean a scientific arrangement of our circulating *coinage*, and of *accounts* in conformity with it. Various have been the suggestions, from time to time, for obviating the incongruities of our present unsystematical and complicated currency, in pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings; but they have rarely been divested of objections at the very outset, tending rather to deter than lead practical men to the consideration of a question, in which they might be supposed to be specially interested. Indeed, I have seldom met with one who had ever gone into it sufficiently to know either its details or practical bearings. It is not uncommon for individuals to inquire what they are to *gain* by a change. Dry and uninviting as to many it may appear, surely a matter affecting the daily and hourly transactions of life cannot be without its interest; not as involving a mere alteration of *coins* required in common barter, (convenient as it would be), but as preliminary to a more ready and correct method of *calculation*, with a consequent curtailment and general improvement in *Accounts* and *Bookkeeping*; in a word, to the substitution of simple for our present compound arithmetical rules, both in the counting-house, and in our schools. I have long been of opinion that the supposed obstacles to a reform like this have been greatly overrated, even by those otherwise friendly to it, provided we abandon in part certain *theoretical* notions, that often prevent

otherwise *practicable* schemes of improvement ; with the special proviso, also, that the present *pound sterling*, unaltered both as to quantity of gold and silver, or in any other way, is the foundation on which to build ; for certain over-scientific persons are only to be satisfied with a money system constructed entirely on a fresh and fanciful basis ; in short, with something that neither would nor ought, among men of business, to be for a moment entertained. Fortunately, our existing coinage presents facilities, with comparatively little innovation, for such a re-arrangement of its elements as sufficiently meets the emergency. As for the common argument about the useful divisors in the shilling, with its twelve parts, all that can be said is that they are convenient in the *present* money system, which I would supersede with a better one. Surely it is worth something only to be rid of the *Pence Table*, the puzzle of schoolboys, and of foreigners.

In our proceedings, however, every degree of deference must be paid to existing circumstances, which require that the present relative notions of value, so long associated in the public mind, should, as far as is compatible with the design in view, be prominently considered and preserved. This may be shown to be entirely feasible ; and, in short, that a great national improvement in our currency and accounts is quite within reach, without the difficulty, confusion, and delay, that it has been common to believe would attend any attempt at change.

My attention was especially directed to the subject under discussion, by an article in the "*Companion to the Almanac*," for 1841, by Professor De Morgan, on the mode by which our existing coinage might be so altered as to be decimalized, and his remarks on the advantages that would result from it. In the detail of his plan, Mr. De Morgan wisely leaves unchanged the pound sterling, or *sovereign* and its *half*. It is required so to divide it that each part shall be subdivided into ten others. The primary step in doing this introduces the tenth of a sovereign, a convenient coin, that would at first sight be recognised ; termed by Mr. De Morgan, for distinction, a *royal*, with its *half* and *quarter*,—in fact, a double shilling, old shilling, and sixpence. These, he proposes, should circulate for some time before the next move is made. With the exception of a gradual withdrawal of crowns, half-crowns, and fourpenny-pieces, our currency thus far would be scarcely altered, except in *names*. The next stage in the transition process presents the greatest novelty and difficulty. Mr. De Morgan here requires the decimal part of a royal. This new element in our coinage he calls a *groat* (with its half), equal to two and four-tenths of the present penny, or $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ very nearly ; and which he thinks might most conveniently be made of a mixed and more portable metal than copper.

The remaining coin would be a *farthing*, ten constituting the groat. These new farthings are, of course, 100 to 96 of the old ones, a variation of four per cent. only; less than the constant fluctuations in the price of copper, and of no practical importance except in large quantity. Mr. De Morgan's system is thus rendered a purely *decimal* one, with a name and a coin for every place of figures. The mode of procedure so laid down is supposed to be a very gradual one; needlessly, and, as I think, injuriously, prolonging the chance of confusion, by spreading the transition process over several years.

We have only, as yet, spoken of the coinage as a medium of *daily barter*, with no reference to *account keeping*,—a weighty consideration in the adjustment of any new system. Fortunately it is one with which the illiterate and lower orders of the people have little or nothing to do. Still, it is desirable to anticipate resistance, by avoiding every unnecessary approach to complexity; and I think it can be shewn, that by attempting *too much* we diminish the chances of *any* valuable change. This we should probably do by insisting on the necessity, in practice, of a system of coins, strictly *decimally* divided throughout, which is not only not requisite, but has hitherto always been the stumbling-block in the way of the improvement we wish to effect. The innovation of an entirely new denomination, like the tenth of a royal, appears too great a one, either for the actual requirements of the case, or for public utility. In the first place, as to the coin itself (call it what you will), a substantial objection arises about its composition—*material*. Neither silver nor copper would be eligible; and the proposed mixed metal of Mr. De Morgan is declared by those who best know its difficulties, to be inadmissible, from the facilities it would give, without chance of detection, to counterfeiting. We need not dwell long as to the temporary evil that would arise, on the first introduction of these coins in the way proposed by Mr. De Morgan, side by side with our present money. Thus circulated, they must pass for $2\frac{1}{2}d.$, ten of them, of course, making $2s. 1d.$, till the period should arrive when the entire new coinage was exclusively in being. The public, in the interim, would ill understand a coin large enough to sensibly bear an irregular relation to the old money, often requiring calculation, and where the link in the chain of association was not, in some way, rendered clearly intelligible. The mode of escape from difficulty is by the adoption of a compromise, excluding it altogether. In a word, instead of a money system in *four*, we must substitute one of greater simplicity, and more conducive to general convenience and brevity, in *three* denominations. I propose, therefore, to pass, at *one step*, from Mr. De Morgan's royal (if that term is continued as the most appropriate), to its

hundredth, or farthing ; a name for which I should substitute the well known and more expressive one—*cent*, giving at once a clue and meaning to the scheme. For this subdivision the royal is a happy medium between the American dollar, and the French franc, with its useless centimes at one end, and an appalling row of figures, sometimes threatening almost to defy computation, at the other.

I think little of the argument that a scheme so arranged presents a compound of the *decimal* and *centesimal* systems. So much the better, if it more perfectly answers the purpose in view, and gives the advantages of both. It has been urged that a mixed arrangement like this would tend to procrastinate time when commercial operations shall be absolutely identical with others : but it is one so easily reduced, that this far-fetched objection weighs as nothing against the certain conveniences ; and it is equally shared by the simple centesimal system of dollars and cents, bequeathed to the Americans by Dr. Franklin.* We must especially look to this part of the question, as it would practically work in the money transactions of humble life, where a large proportion come in value below the royal. These probably seldom ascend by *fives* than by half-pence, or even farthings. The association of a farthing, as identical with a cent, would speedily lead to the concise mode of pricing all articles, when the royal is excluded, in *cents* alone ; which an intermediate denomination would only serve to perplex and complicate both in speech and writing. If, additionally, we have now the royal, matters in this respect become worse ; *three* denominations being then requisite in which to express ourselves. These minor details are not beneath notice in considering a new system ; and they become more important when it is also to be on paper. Though many might write a sum thus : £4 . 925, (for our old £4 18s. 6d.,) yet the chain of association connected with the three divisional lines in an account book would be irresistible with most persons ; and no doubt would be best understood, and most conducive of clearness, with the public. Suppose we take the sum, £13 6s. 3¼d. : this would be written, in the *three* proposed denominations, £13 3r. 13cts. ; and on the purely decimal plan, of *four* denominations, £13 3r. 1g. 3f. ; or perhaps more com-

* To this example I might add that of Holland, where, as I am informed, the very change in the arrangement of the coins I am advocating in our own country, has without difficulty been recently actually accomplished. The guilder (one shilling and eight-pence of our money), formerly equivalent to twenty stivers, has been sub-divided into *one hundred cents* (of course one-sixth part less than our farthing). All calculations and accounts, by the Dutch, are now rendered centesimally, in guilders and cents.

monly it would be expressed £13 3*r.* 1*g.* 3-10ths; thus perpetuating, or rather increasing, in the proportion of 10 to 4, the ugly excrescence of farthings at the tail of a money sum. The very term *farthing* (*four-thing*, or *fourth-ling*) marks the impropriety of ever divorcing it from its legitimate parent, the *penny*.

We have already described our altered coins, so far as gold and silver are concerned; and have also seen that as regards the hundredth of a royal, the old farthing is practically a sufficiently near approximation to it. To perfect our whole series, therefore, we must add a *one*, *two*, and *five-cent* piece, in copper; probably a *three-cent* coin would be convenient in the odd numbers. A further useful coin would be one of *fifteen-cents*, in silver, scarcely differing from our present *four-penny* piece, or groat. Those who might be disposed to demur to the completeness of this series without a *ten-cent* copper piece, could have a lumbering coin, which few persons would prefer to two *fives*. Our final coinage would be—in gold, the *sovereign* (ten royals), and half-sovereign; in silver, the *royal*, with its half and quarter (respectively stamped, one-hundred, fifty, and twenty-five cents), and a *fifteen-cent* coin; in copper, *one*, *two* (perhaps *three*) and *five-cent* pieces. Some might desire to retain the crown, or *quarter-pound*.

We may now stop to consider what portion is likely to be realized, as regards the public, of the confusion and difficulty which it has been common to represent would be the certain concomitant of a re-constructed money system. Let it be imagined that all the present coins in the pockets of the first fifty persons we might meet were by some means changed at once, piece for piece, into the proposed new ones; what practical difference could it make to one of these individuals? Every coin, silver or copper, would be stamped with its component hundredths; each having its counterpart, or nearly so, in those now in use; so that actual relative value would be understood by the most ignorant; nor would the small supposable clashing at first, from the 4 per cent. difference in the copper, sensibly alter the price of a single common article. Old *names* would probably linger on for a while, if that is important; but as far as mere innovation in our coins is concerned, we have had much greater in the eighteen-penny, three-shilling, five and six-penny, and seven-shilling pieces, besides Spanish dollars, that were, in our own time, blended with the circulation.

As respects the power of making a change in our coinage, it is fortunate that any government can do it, whenever it thinks proper, and as speedily as it chooses. Of course the operations at the mint must be powerful in influencing the establishment of any new money scheme; for I believe that, when begun, the

more quickly the total change was made the better, particularly as respects displacing the pennies; the copper being chiefly affected. "Where there is a will there is a way;" and some thirty years ago, the entire old silver money of the country was simultaneously replaced by new. What was possible at that time might doubtless be repeated when it was needed; though as regards shillings and sixpences, they would for a time sufficiently well represent and circulate with half and quarter royals. The discrepancy in the two sets of copper coins, though not perceptible in small dealings, ought however to be adjusted in some way, without loss of unnecessary time. In the instance just alluded to, of altering the silver currency, it was conveniently done in every principal town, by exchanging on the spot the old for the new—coin for coin. Whether the like could be done now, as respects copper, I am not sufficiently informed to be able to say; but if this is impracticable, at least all at once, a temporary purpose would be answered, were the old farthings and half-pence to be sufficiently stamped, as *one* and *two* cents. The difference of value should at the same time be allowed; that is, for every £5 worth of the old copper, either exchanged or thus stamped, must be given, additionally, two hundred *cent*, one hundred *two*, or forty *five-cent* pieces. We must, under any circumstances, avoid the stupid blunder of the French, who introduced a decimal money, leaving the old coins—I believe to the present day—jumbled with the new, to the confusion of both; so that it is not unusual in business, to reckon on one system and pay in the other. Surely no government ought to withhold the necessary trouble and expense, once and for ever, of rendering efficiently a service like this to the community, through all future generations.

The mode of calculating and of account keeping, in conformity with the new coins, would gradually become a matter of general convenience, if not of necessity; and as this took place, the ease in practice, and positive advantages of the decimal system, (if I am to be allowed the term,) would become proportionably apparent. The Government would compel its adoption in the public offices, though as concerns all articles of revenue the duty is fixed in the existing currency by Act of Parliament, and so must remain till altered. In receiving every thing of this kind, the amount would have, in the first instance, to be calculated in the present way. This would be brought into the new money for payment, the work of a few moments only, and be so entered in the books. The same would also be done in all cases in which dues or claims, of whatever nature, had become the objects of legislative enactment. But, in truth, as relates to subjects of taxation in any way, it would be most convenient to

re-enact them in the new money, a matter rendered still more easy by the recent curtailment of the tariff list. Minor imposts alone, would be liable to any controversy. The most remarkable of these are the newspaper and postage stamps of a penny in each. The newspaper stamp offers no difficulty, as, if the tax is fixed nominally at *five-cents*, an allowance in payment of sixteen per cent. would leave the amount as at present. Not so with postages, collected singly, where the penny, received as *four-cents* new money, would leave the revenue deficient four per cent. Whether a Government willing to favor so important a change as that we have been contemplating, ought to suffer in consequence, would be decided by me in the negative; and I think, on the contrary, that no reasonable person ought to grudge the addition of sixteen per cent. mean gain, involved in fixing a *five-cent* piece as the postage of a letter.

We will now give an exemplification of *pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings*, thus brought into *pounds, royals, and cents*. Annexed to the amounts, on both systems, are given the number of coins requisite to pay or receive them, respectively. In doing this, the shortest are used, with the exception of crowns, which might be common to either scheme. In order farther to illustrate the convenience of the decimal plan, a few common calculations and sums are given in the usual rules of *Compound Arithmetic*, as pertaining to the present coinage; contrasting with each, the corresponding calculation in the new money, in *Simple Arithmetic*, with the number of figures respectively employed. This latter, however, is not the only criterion of advantage, as a practised hand will perceive that the old method not only involves a larger degree of thought and trouble, but requires more figures often than are shewn, with a corresponding liability to error. The relative totals will not in all instances be perfectly equivalent, owing to the small variations, unnoticed, in the old farthings and new cents. The two systems will now be before us; and let it not be thought an unimportant matter to save daily in every place of business throughout the United Kingdom, a large amount of time, at present spent in worse than useless labor. Is the curtailment of drudgery to our school teachers and their pupils of no value to society, by the excision from our arithmetical rules, of a considerable portion which would be rendered superfluous by a decimal coinage?

Professor De Morgan in the article in the *British Almanac* before alluded to, gives a method of approximately converting the old into the new money; but for most purposes, the following simple table will suffice; dividing the parts of 12 old pence into new cents. If the amount exceeds a shilling, 50 more cents must be added.

PENCE	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
CENTS	1	2	4	8	12	16	20	25	29	33	37	41	45	50

£.	s.	d.	Coins.	£.	R.	Cents.	Coins.
7	1	6	2	7	0	75	2
4	12	$1\frac{1}{4}$	5	4	6	5	3
1	15	$9\frac{3}{4}$	8	1	7	91	7
3	6	$2\frac{1}{2}$	6	3	3	10	5
<hr/>			<hr/>		<hr/>		
£16	15	$7\frac{1}{2}$	21	£16	7	81	17
20				167	royals.		
<hr/>			<hr/>		<hr/>		
335	shillings.			16,781	cents.		
12							
<hr/>			<hr/>		<hr/>		
4,027	pence.			Deduct	671	4 per cent. difference.	
4							
<hr/>			<hr/>		<hr/>		
16,110	farthings.			16,110	cents.		

From	£	s.	d.	From	£	R.	Cts.
Subtract	25	2	$5\frac{1}{4}$	Subtract	25	1	21
	17	9	$8\frac{3}{4}$		17	4	85
<hr/>				<hr/>			
	£7	12	$8\frac{3}{4}$		£7	6	36

Multiply	£	s.	d.	by	Multiply	£	R.	Cts.
	58	17	$1\frac{1}{2}$	35		58	8	56
			11					35
<hr/>					<hr/>			
	647	8	$4\frac{1}{2}$			294	2	80
			3			1,765	6	80
<hr/>					<hr/>			
	1,942	5	$1\frac{1}{2}$					
	117	14	3					
<hr/>					<hr/>			
£2,059	19	$4\frac{1}{2}$	—38 figures.		£2,059	9	60	—27 figures.

Multiply	£	s.	d.	by	Multiply	£	R.	Ct.
	562	10	4	125		562	5	16
			10				1	25
<hr/>					<hr/>			
	5,625	3	4			2,812	5	80
			10			11,250	3	20
<hr/>					<hr/>			
	56,251	13	4	100 times		56,251	6	
	2,812	11	8	5 times				
	11,250	6	8	20 times				
<hr/>					<hr/>			
£70,314	11	8	—49 figures.		£70,314	5	0	—36 figures.

\pounds	s.	d.	R.	C.	\pounds	R.	C.	\pounds	R.	C.
Divide by 456)	3,252	16	2½	(£7	Divide by 4 56)	3,252	8	10	(7	1 33
	3,192					3,192				
	60					60	8			
	20					45	6			
456)	1,216	(2 shillings.				15	2	1		
	912					13	6	8		
	304					1	5	30		
	12					1	3	68		
456)	3,650	(8 pence.								
	3,648									
	2									
	4									
	10	£7 2s. 8d.				1	62	7	1	33
		52 figures.								43 figs.

79 lbs. at 5¾d. per lb.

d.	£.	s.	d.
4	1	6	4
1	0	6	7
½	0	3	3½
¼	0	1	7¾

£1 17 10¼—21 figures.

79 pounds
at 24 cents per lb.

3	16
1	5 80

£1 8 96—15 figs.

1,149 yards at 18s. 6¾d. per yard.

s.	d.	£	s.	d.
10	0	574	10	0
5	0	287	5	0
2	6	143	12	6
1	0	57	9	0
0	0½	2	7	10
0	0¼	1	3	11

£1,066 8 3—43 figures.

1,149 yards
at 9 28 per yard.

9	1	92
22	9	80
1,034	1	

£1,066 2 72—28 figs.

Cwt. lb. at £ s. d. per cwt.
50 55 at 4 13 10

46	18	4
		5

234	11	8
2	6	11
0	4	8¼

£237 3 3¼—37 figures.

Cwt. lb. at £ R. C. per cwt.
50 55 at 4 6 91

234	5	50
2	3	45
	2	34

£237 1 29—29 figs.

In conclusion, I may be allowed, when on the subject of decimalized *coins*, to say a word as to the kindred one of decimal *weights*, about which, I believe, a Government commission was not very long since appointed. It is difficult to see what useful purpose would be answered by any interference with these, unaccompanied or preceded by an altered coinage. Indeed, under any circumstances, most practical persons, I believe, think, that all that can be done, with the smallest chance of public acceptance, is comprised in a diminution of the avoirdupois *hundred-weight*, from 112lbs. to its legitimate 100lbs., as in America; the *pound* to remain unaltered. The present intervening *quarters* in accounts, would then be superfluous. Unless business is to be thrown into general confusion, the hundred weight must continue at twenty to the *ton*. This is of the less importance, as it is usual and more convenient to write and calculate common transactions in hundred-weights, without advancing for the purpose to tons. The anomalous *stone* weight by custom now varying absurdly, from $7\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. to the legal 14lbs., (in London it is known only as 8lbs.,) might without much difficulty, be fixed uniformly, by a compromise, at 10lbs.; and this, with the *ounce* at 10 to the pound, would give us every really beneficial object, without annoyance or much expense. We might then, aided by a decimalized coinage, strike out another portion of what would become obsolete arithmetical sums; thus further setting free the time of our clerks and school children, to be applied to much more valuable pursuits.

I conclude, as I commenced, with the conviction that no alteration in money or weights would be feasible or desirable, that went beyond the modification of some existing and long recognized basis in either; nor have I, as an utilitarian, the slightest degree of sympathy with those who will have *all or none* of some no doubt well intended and perhaps strictly scientific theory; but who, in fact, are sometimes the worst enemies of improvement of any kind.

In reference especially to an improved coinage, with Professor De Morgan (although I believe he over-estimates the difficulties of a change), I should say, that "I cannot but think there are few who, looking at the gradual and easy manner in which the new system could be introduced, would count their own share of the necessary inconvenience too much to pay for a real and lasting benefit to society."

London, February, 1846.

APPENDIX.

THE brief remarks as to Decimal Weights, in the preceding page, were made without reference to any systematic arrangement of these throughout. It was not till publication had taken place that opportunity was presented of seeing an abstract of the Reports of the Government Commissioners, appointed at intervals during the last twenty-five years, to consider the heterogeneous state of our national weights and measures. These documents, coupled with the recent enactments on the subject, (imperfect as the results of the latter were), have done good service in defining and establishing our actual standards of weight, and of capacity. We have arrived at the foundation, and at least now know what a *pound* and a *gallon* really are. But we have still to find out, as best we can, what is meant by an *ounce*; or, if we speak of a *drachm*, whether it contain 60, 54-7, or 27-34375 grains.

The more important principles of reform are comprised in the Report (the last) of 1841, wherein is recommended a standard, as to *weight*, of the present *Avoirdupois Pound*; whilst in respect to the measure of *Capacity*, the commissioners consider that it should be defined by the previous one of weight. The existing *Imperial Gallon* of 277,274 cubic inches capacity, containing 10 pounds Avoirdupois of distilled water, would thus become the basis of any new sub-divisions as to measure. The commissioners, however, recommend, as the best preliminary to these changes, a decimalized *coinage*.

It appears, that for scientific purposes, sets of weights have already been constructed in decimal progression, from 10,000 grains downwards to the 1-100th part of a grain. What better can be done than to adopt this scheme, as the future decimal subdivision of the standard Avoirdupois pound? This now contains 7,000 *Troy* grains. The purposes of science would probably be facilitated by such an extended sub-division; whilst any inconvenience in common or professional matters, might be so met as to be but temporary. At all events, this proposition offers the only feasible mode of accomplishing the great desideratum—decimal arrangement. Coupled with the second recommendation of the Commissioners, the two following simple and perfect tables would result, adequate to every requirement. As to *names* throughout (little as some of them may correspond in relation to present quantities), there seems no reason for abandoning them or any other.

IMPERIAL WEIGHTS.

Grain						
1	Scruple					
10	1					
100	10	Drachm				
1,000	100	1	Ounce			
10,000	1,000	10	1	Pound		
100,000	10,000	100	10	1	Stone	
1,000,000	100,000	1,000	100	10	1	Cwt.
		10,000	1,000	100	10	1

IMPERIAL MEASURES OF CAPACITY (LIQUID OR DRY).

Cubic Inches	1 Grain or Minim.
28	10 Grains measure 1 Scruple.
277	10 Scruples „ 1 Drachm.
2, 773	10 Drachms „ 1 Ounce.
27, 727	10 Ounces „ 1 Pound.
277, 274	10 Pounds „ 1 Gallon.
2,772, 740	10 Gallons „ 1 Hundred.

In the foregoing table, no attempt is made to reconcile or include with it, the present measures of corn, &c., above the gallon. The best remedy for the numerous incongruities in this connexion, would be the principle (already locally in operation) of valuing such articles by the new hundred of *weight* (100lbs). The recent compulsory change, as regards the sale of coals, from measure to weight, seems to present an instance of the complete practicability of a reform of this kind. Should, however, obstinate local custom influence an adherence in any quarter to the principle of *measure*, every facility is afforded by the preceding scale aided by the sub-divisions of the cwt. of *capacity*, and of the gallon, into their respective halves and quarters (or quarts). By either mode of procedure, the present *bushel*, including its sub-divisions and accretions, would become obsolete; and with these a long catalogue of absurd and arbitrary local weights, measures and terms, which would be swept into oblivion.

As regards the introduction of these important improvements in our coinage, weights, &c. (for we must not believe that recommendations resulting from the investigation of such men as composed the commission, names honored in science throughout the world, are destined to remain a dead letter), to whom are we to look? All experience goes to show that the public at large and especially the busy classes, are not the parties to seek or originate such changes, although they might ultimately receive them with satisfaction. Is it too much to expect from our *scientific bodies* that they should descend to the concerns of every day life, and use their legitimate influence with our legislators in effecting substantial good of the kind we are discussing? Probably, formerly, the *Royal Society* would not have considered beyond or beneath their province to enter upon such a field. The most prudent first step would, perhaps, be, by a parliamentary enactment, a simple recognition of the foregoing scheme of weights and measures, and providing the requisite accords and standards. Where there was nothing compulsory, opposition would be disarmed; at the same time, a point of immense importance would be gained in the fact, that the decimal Imperial system had an *actual and legal existence*. The scientific world would, doubtless, at once adopt it; whilst its extreme simplicity, convenience, and comprehensive nature, must, aided by government support, lead to its gradually extended use; till the period should arrive, when it might become expedient to put down by law all other weights and measures, for any purpose whatever.